



Since 1893, services & solutions
for people with disabilities.

The NEAT Center
at Oak Hill

Tel: (860) 243-2869
(866) 526-4492

www.neatmarketplace.org

**Planning and Development Committee / HB 5142 and
5259**

Bruce C. Stovall Vice President Oak Hill

February 7, 2011

**Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile and members
of the Planning and Development committee my name
is Bruce Stovall and I am here to represent Oak Hill.**

**Oak Hill is the largest community based private non-
profit provider of services for people with disabilities in
CT. with a specialized focus on people who are
developmentally disabled, blind, and multiply
handicapped. We currently operate programs in over
50 Connecticut towns and serve people with disabilities
from birth to over 90 years of age. I am here to voice
our strong opposition to House Bill 5142 and 5259.**

**Oak Hill manages over 85 community residences
throughout our state. We directly care for
approximately 500 individuals with a variety of
disabilities. They are the most vulnerable segments of
our population. In the past they were marginalized and
segregated into institutions,-kept isolated and cut off
from the benefits of mainstream society. Our society
evolved over the past four decades and the community
inclusion movement took hold across this state and
across the country at large. We learned that these
individuals could live, work, and contribute to our
communities and enjoy the opportunities that were
not available in the past.**

**We are concerned with these house bills for a number
of reasons. We believe that they represent a step
backwards, a step towards a past that devalued the
rights of those with disabilities. Another concern is the
question of the proposed "hearings". I'd ask you to ask**

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yourself right now;-when you choose to move to a new neighborhood, are you willing to subject yourself to a "hearing"? Are you willing to see if you pass muster with the neighbors? Willing to see if you are acceptable? Is this not a violation of the civil and human rights we hold so dear?

And finally I'd like to leave you with this thought and this question. Who exactly are these people that we are talking about? Who are the people that live in these "group homes"? Who are the disabled? The simple answer is they are our daughters and our sons,- our sisters and brothers, cousins, and friends. Our community residences are the homes of people with disabilities just as sure as your house or apartment is your home. They are your constituents and surely they are entitled to the same rights as everyone in this room. Please vote no on these bills. Thank you very much.

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